

## 208 EMILE ZOLA., NOVELIST AND KEFOKMEB

summer, and eventually finished at Me\*dan in the autumn, "Pot-Bouille" first appeared, somewhat bowdlerised, in "Le Gaulois," which paid the author thirty thousand francs\* for the serial rights. But even Zola's best friends did not receive the work very favourably. In writing it he had made a trial of his own scientific formula, keeping his descriptions

as short as possible, dividing the narrative into acts, as it were, like a play, curbing his fancy throughout, allowing no exuberance of style; and he was afterwards amazed to find so many cavillers. "It is the clearest and most condensed of my novels," he wrote to a friend early in 1882.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, this time the public seemed to share the opinion of the critics. The sale of "Pot-Bouille" in volume form<sup>3</sup> was much smaller than that of "L'Assommoir"

and "Nana," a circumstance which is worthy of note, for Zola's adversaries had argued that if "Nana" had sold so largely it was solely on account of all the depravity depicted in its pages. But here was a book which, in that respect, actually surpassed "Nana," and yet it had nothing like the same sale. It has been suggested by way of explanation

that middle-class people were the chief purchasers of Zola's works, and that while they appreciated his delineation of

depravity among others, they were offended by his description of it among themselves. In that respect "Pot-Bouille" certainly brought Zola some worry; for as a gentleman of

<sup>1</sup> £1,200 = about \$6,000.

<sup>2</sup> Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 193.

<sup>8</sup> "Pot-Bouille," Paris, Charpentier, 1882, 18mo, 499 pages ; some copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese paper; eighty-second thousand in. 1893, ninety-fifth thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Marpon and Mammarrion, 1883, large 8vo, titles, 452 pages. Fifty-seven wood-engravings after Bellanger and Kaufmann. Sold also in parts at 10 centimes. One hundred special copies on Dutch paper with the engravings on India paper.